

# Australian Garden HISTORY

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*Tasmania revisited*

*Albury conference*

*Alfred Patterson and a Bathurst park*

*Lutyens in Australia*



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Cover: *The giant Amazon waterlily (Victoria amazonica)*, depicted by botanical artist Walter Fitch in the stupendous book *Victoria Regia (1851)*, now on display at Adelaide Botanic Garden [courtesy Botanic Gardens of Adelaide]—see story on page 21

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Photo: Brian Voce

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The lake at the entrance to the garden is a tranquil haven at Woomargama Station, home of Margaret Darling former chair and former patron of the Society.

# Tasmania revisited

Gail Douglass and Trisha Dixon

The opportunity to join another trip to Tasmania—and to be led by Trisha Dixon and Jackie Courmadias—is one many AGHS members would not miss, regardless of how many times we have visited this beautiful isle.

Interwoven during our tour of significant gardens were the artist John Glover's landscapes and naturalist Louisa Meredith's influence on botanical art in Tasmania. It was, therefore, with great anticipation that we all met earlier this year in Launceston to renew old friendships and to begin new ones.

The first part of our tour took us to Mole Creek and Chudleigh where we visited **Bentley**, the home of Robyn Hawkins, president of the Society's Tasmanian Branch. After purchasing in 2003, Robyn and John Hawkins immediately set about restoring the single-storey villa (c.1879) and surrounds. The natural valley setting has many vistas, including to the majestic Great Western Tiers. The landscape surrounding the homestead is one of planned simplicity. Original stands of *Quercus* and *Tilia* have been carefully augmented with carefully placed trees. The expanses of grasslands are surrounded by magnificent dry stone walls and a perimeter of layered Hawthorn hedges. The two lakes have been enlarged to attract water birds and the outer areas have been developed with plants indigenous to the area.

A short drive away was **Wychwood**, originally a bare one-hectare paddock which Karen Hall and Peter Cooper have transformed over 14 years into a garden that features sweeping lawns, rose and perennial borders, grasses, fruit trees, and many other drought and frost resistant plants. Clever use of large-leafed privet hedging creates rooms, and also swirls and twists ending in a blue gravel shape with centrally placed a sculpture. In the creek paddock is a medieval grass labyrinth, beautiful when viewed from above.

Close by is **Old Wesleydale**, significant for its early Georgian homestead and outbuildings (1836). Deb and Scott Wilson have owned it for 6 years and have brought the garden—including a ha ha and amazing *Lonicera* elephant hedge—back to life. Of great interest also were their vegetable beds and the large cages full of Macau birds which Scott is breeding.

The Mecca of most AGHS members and other privileged gardeners is Fairie Nielson's **Pigeon Hill** near Burnie which she began 60 years ago. Pigeon Hill enjoys a maritime climate with rich chocolate soil, but this was a disadvantage in the



Striking hedges of *Cupressus macrocarpa* partially enclose Annabel Scott's garden at Dunedin and provide it with protection from prevailing winds.

early years with weeds and noxious plants covering the property. Fairie cleared the hills and gullies lowering herself down by rope secured from above! What she has created is inspirational. The magnificent mature plantings of trees, conifers, rhododendrons, and shrubs give constant pleasure to their creator and the many fortunate visitors.

**Emu Valley Rhododendron Gardens** was started in 1985 by North Tasmania Branch members of the Australian Rhododendron Society. Fairie Nielson was a founding member and still works in the gardens several times a week. The 13 ha garden is a natural amphitheatre with over 20,000 plants. Hybrid and species rhododendrons and their companions are in geographical arrangement representing the origins of these species from Asia Minor across through to Himalayas and on to China, Japan, and North America.

Susan Irvine is one of Australia's noted gardeners and her collection of roses is legendary. Twelve years ago Susan and Bill Irvine, on a fishing trip to Tasmania, drove past the fine old Georgian House, **Forest Hall**, with a for sale sign up—the rest is history! Susan's passion and knowledge of roses is remarkable and to see them together with the fine old oaks, mulberry, hollies, and *Amelanchier*, mingling with peonies and perennials is a treat.

Gothic revival **Dunedin** sits in the centre of the 10,000 ha property with an immaculate *Cupressus macrocarpa* hedge that once a year takes two hedge-cutters an entire week to clip. The garden is the creation of Annabel Scott, a passionate and intelligent gardener. Her garden is a treasure trove of fascinating plants intermingled with her much loved favourites in wonderful colour schemes.

The convict-built home and outbuildings of **Strathmore** date back to 1826. A feature of the property is the lake which is joined to the Nile



Beautiful, sculptural benches, made by Peter Adams, are in carefully chosen positions along the walks at Windgrove.



Getting the perfect shot – Craig Burton captures the view over the old parterre garden at Summerhome.

River by a mill race. Sue and Gordon Gillon have brought the garden to life since moving to Strathmore in 1993. The walled garden is a fine example reminiscent of those built on large estates in Ireland and is one of three in Tasmania that was heated, the fireplace still evident on the rear side.

Through the Deddington Valley where John Glover lived and painted we come to **Uplands** the home of Georgie and Hamish Wallace. An elegantly designed garden with central courtyard and wonderful herbaceous borders, Georgie battles the elements and hungry wildlife (including deer). There are stunning views from the garden across to Stack's Bluff and the Ben Lomond range.

On our way to Hobart we visited **Cambria** (1836), once home of eminent naturalist, author, and illustrator Louisa Meredith. Overlooking the Meredith River, the garden is one of Tasmania's earliest and retains its circular box hedge and stately araucarias.

On the slopes of Mount Wellington is **Canning**, home and garden of Naomi Canning. Her home and part of her garden were burnt in the 1967 fires but many trees survived. This tragedy gave rise to a new home, sited higher for views of the Derwent River and to have the home flow into the garden by use of existing boulders and reflecting pools designed by her son Torquil. Naomi's

garden has a wonderful collection of trees and plants in particular *Nothofagus* species and others indigenous to Tasmania.

Further along the slopes we visited **Sally Johannoohn**, well known for her rare plants nursery. Sally has created a quirky, exuberant garden combining her intense love of plants with that of design and creative wood sculpture. Her wonderful water spiral sprinklers throw sprays in glistening spiral patterns.

A morning ramble in Richmond was enjoyed en route to **Marlbrook** (1840) at Pontville, garden of Mary and Richard Darcy. Sadly fine old stables, barns, and granaries were destroyed in the 1967 fires. The central garden design reflects the simple symmetry of the house with four segments defined by box hedging and *Coprosma* 'Karo Red' which makes an excellent hedge.

Special viewings were arranged to view Louisa Meredith and John Glover's paintings at the **Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery**. We were also very fortunate on our visit to **Government House** and to have its head gardener conduct our tour. The gardens have changed very little from the original plans. Formal lawns set off the house while informal winding paths lead through the woodland setting of a romantic lake made where the stone for the house was quarried.

**Summerhome** is an excellent example of an intact early Victorian garden. It was built at Moonah (now a suburb of Hobart) as a rural summer retreat. Of particular importance is the huge parterre and original glass house with grapevines planted outside and an opening for the trunks to grow inside in the protected microclimate. The plantings are very interesting, being a fine example of the Victorian gardenesque style.

**Windgrove** presented a total contrast to the other visits. The site at Roaring Beach on the Tasman



Fairie Nielsen, gardener extraordinaire, who delights all with her fortitude and her tales of gardening a challenging site.



At Marlbrook Mary Darcy designed the garden around the central axis between the entrance gate and front door.

Peninsula was originally cleared for a sheep farm and had become very degraded, but with careful management all the natural vegetation is returning. Peter Adams has created a living entity, and placed his sculptures and wooden benches along a natural pathway that allow visitors to meditate or focus their attention to the differing landscapes. He has planted thousands of local trees and shrubs believing that the trend towards natural gardening and blending into the landscape will remain part of future gardening.

The owners of **Corinda**, Wilmar Bouman and Matthew Ryan, have restored their stately Victorian home and recreated a classic garden including pleached linden trees, box parterres, and yew hedges enclosing different colour schemes. As we headed back to Launceston we enjoyed a visit to the historic township of **Ross** with its fine Georgian cottages and bridge.

Our final visit was to **Beaufront** (1837) a 10,000 ha fine merino wool property which has been in the Von Bibra family since 1914. The careful positioning of the house on a knoll emphasises vistas of the rolling countryside, carefully separating the pleasure garden from the utilitarian vegetable and picking garden. We experienced the incredible richness and diversity of Tasmania and its gardens, and enjoyed generosity and hospitality from the very special owners and custodians of this unique heritage.

**Gail Douglass** gardens at Stratford House at Tahmoor in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. **Trisha Dixon** is well-known as a photographer, writer, and broadcaster, and her latest book—*Under the Spell of the Ages: Australian country gardens*—has just been published by the National Library of Australia.



# Albury *cultivating a city in the country*

*Bruce Pennay*

An inland settlement, Albury grew into a municipality, a regional city, and a growth centre within a rural context. As host city for Australian Garden History Society's 28th annual national conference, we look at the history of Albury's regional landscape.

## **Aboriginal occupation**

Dense and sedentary Aboriginal populations lived along the Murray River. They had in the riverine environment a rich source of fish, game, and plants. As a result, there was little need to move from its banks. The river itself probably united rather than divided groups and it seems to have been one long river-system, rather than a collection of separate tribal valleys. There was a great deal of exchange along it. People speaking languages such as Bangerang, Dhuudhuroa, Kwat Kwat, and Wiradjuri lived as several groupings in the upper sections of the river. Each clustered within the main river valley itself and/or in the valley of a tributary, such as the Ovens or Broken Rivers. Two kinds of river place seem to have attracted Aboriginal peoples: river junctions and river shallows. Artefacts suggest that junctions were major industrial areas while fishing was comparatively easy in the shallows.

## **Crossing place**

White explorers Hamilton Hume and Captain William Hovell discovered the Murray River and signs of the people who lived there in November 1824. They named the river the Hume and inscribed trees on the northern riverbank, where they first approached what seemed to be a natural ford. Because the river was running swiftly, they had difficulty in making a crossing and eventually found a way across the river near the site of the present-day Hume Dam.

Pushed by a drought to find pasture and water in the mid-1830s, several overlanders made their way south to the crossing Hume and Hovell had first tried to use. In 1835 or shortly thereafter, runs were established at Mungabareena on the north bank of the Murray, at Wodonga (or Woodonga) on the south bank of the Murray opposite Mungabareena, and at Bonegilla, to the east of Wodonga, between the Murray, Kiewa, and Mitta Mitta Rivers.

There was, however, an abrupt halt to the growing movement of livestock south in 1838, when for a period of two or three months, there were raids, reprisals, and open warfare between blacks and whites. Governor Gipps moved to meet the resistance and to quell the violence by establishing a Border Police unit and a Native Police unit. He also established 'regular halting places or posts of protection' at the principal crossings between Sydney and the Port Phillip district—at the Murrumbidgee, Murray, Ovens, and Goulburn Rivers, and at Violet Creek. Towns were founded at these posts, as part of an overall military strategy to make safe the route to Port Phillip and to settle the inland districts. The Government dispatched surveyors to select town sites, including one that might be built at the Murray River crossing place, where the enterprising Robert Brown had established a store.<sup>1</sup>

*Governor Gipps ... established  
'regular halting places or posts  
of protection' at the principal  
crossings between Sydney and the  
Port Phillip district*

Lady Jane Franklin, on her daring journey overland from Port Phillip to Sydney in 1839, left signs of her visit behind her. In a letter to Sir John in April from the crossing place that was to become Albury, she told how she had brought a packet of clover seed on her journey 'for the express purpose of ... disseminating pastures along the travellers' track'. She sowed seed of white clover (*Trifolium repens*) in the trench dug around their tent to carry off the rain. Throughout the rest of her journey Lady Franklin was to sow her seeds wherever she stopped. By 1860 the white clover—now regarded as an environmental weed—had spread luxuriantly.<sup>2</sup>

## Rural township

Albury—and Belvoir on the southern side of the Murray—grew and prospered in the 1850s, servicing not only passing travellers but a growing number of settlers. The discovery of gold at the nearby Beechworth and the Indigo gold fields boosted development, and the demand for meat, hay, foodstuffs such as potatoes, flour, and grapes.

In 1856 the New South Wales Government agreed to build a bridge across the Murray, as part of a number of improvements along the length of the Great Southern Road that linked it with its gold-rich neighbour, the newly separated colony of Victoria. The young Henry Parkes saw the significance of the bridge at Albury making the link between the old and new colonies. He predicted that the capital of a federal union of the colonies might be sited at the Murray River crossing place to prevent jealousy between the two.<sup>3</sup> The aptly named Union Bridge was opened in 1861 in what Albury folk proudly called the Federal City.

James Fallon, an enterprising general store proprietor, prospered supplying the goldfields. About 1864, he became a principal in establishing steamboat connection with the Echuca railhead and Melbourne market. He began to focus on the wine trade and acquired the Murray Valley Vineyard, building large cellars in central Albury.

Fallon was important in creating a proud self-image—for him Albury was ‘the garden of the colonies for the cultivation of wine’. Yet the Albury wineries suffered with onerous colonial border customs duties and soon after, phylloxera. When the Victorian government sponsored vine planting and cultivation in the early 1890s and production across the river in the North East, Victoria boomed.<sup>4</sup>

## Railways, wool, wheat, and federation

The railway from Melbourne to Belvoir (renamed Wodonga in 1873) tapped the Riverina trade and succeeded in pulling wool to the southern capital. New South Wales was concerned about the loss of trade and pushed its own railway system to Albury in 1881. In 1883, the two railways were connected but not joined as they were built to different gauges. Despite this, the railway connection was perceived as marking a turning point in the movement towards Federation. Through the 1880s and 1890s railway tariffs and branch lines also helped establish the Riverina as a wheat growing area and Sydney as its principal port.

In 1889, the police magistrate and mining warden, Thomas Browne, with his wife Margaret and their children, took up residence in 642 Olive Street, Albury. Writing under the pseudonym of ‘Rolf Boldrewood’, Browne had published several novels in serial form during the 1870s



National Library of Australia (pic-an2293206)

*‘Broad St., Sydney Rd., Albury, N.S.W.’ (1891): a charming if slightly naive view of early cottage landholdings on the fringe of the town, evocatively capturing the hilly setting beyond the river flats of the Murray.*

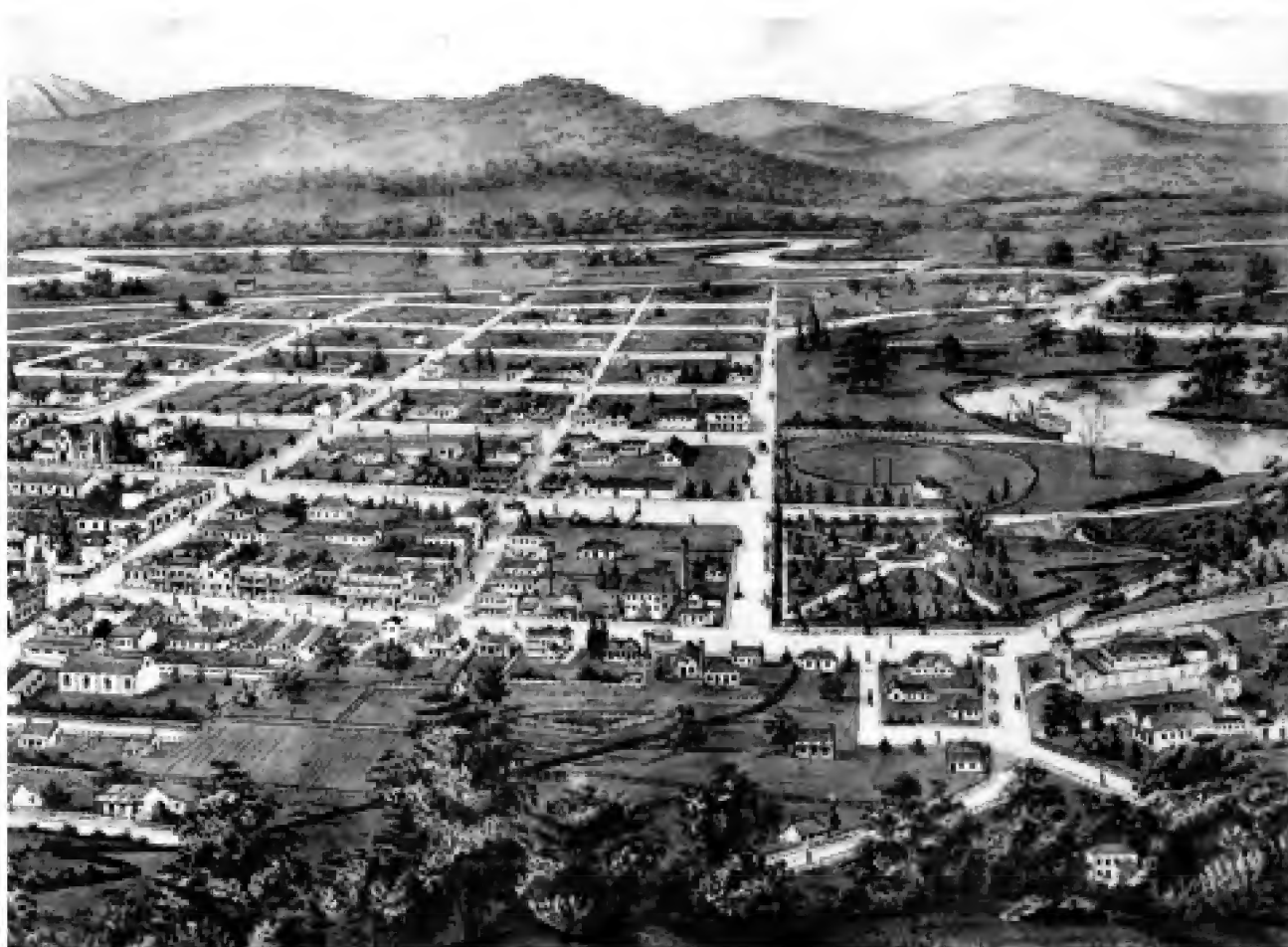
and his latest, *Robbery Under Arms*, published as he arrived, was a marked success. In 1893 Margaret Browne published *The Flower Garden in Australia: a book for ladies and amateurs* in Melbourne under the pseudonym 'Mrs Rolf Boldrewood'. Claimed as the first gardening book written by an Australian woman, it extolled the virtues of gardening as a meaningful and delightful recreation for country women.<sup>5</sup> The Olive Street house the Brownes rented was in a 'rising part of the town', hailed as Albury's Hyde Park. A near neighbour, Samuel Mudge, had planted Albury's first street tree outside his house at 616 Olive Street in 1875.

Albury Botanic Gardens were established in 1877 and a horticultural society began in 1886, the same year reticulated water supply was 'turned on'. Margaret Browne entered the local show competitions, winning prizes for her pot plants and hyacinths. As well as gentling her domestic space, Margaret Browne's cultivated garden lent to the gentrification of the area and the town. Her husband meanwhile lent his support to the town's federal capital ambitions, hailing Albury as the 'Washington' of Australia.

## Albury the Coming City

Drought at the beginning of the twentieth century forced governments to give attention to the river. In 1914, the Commonwealth offered firm funding proposals to establish storage on the river, principally between Cumberoona and Ebdon, just north of Albury and Wodonga. The River Murray Agreement of 1915 established the River Murray Commission, and work began on constructing the Hume Weir in 1919. The building of the weir was a massive project and involved a large workforce. This large-scale project was frequently compared with other big national and world projects. Locally the beauty of the lake formed behind the new storage was also celebrated in poetry and in song.<sup>6</sup>

The taming of the Murray helped with the creation of riverside parks in Albury itself. The parks had been suggested by Charles Reade, a visiting town planner in 1915. Reade had also suggested that council acquire Western Hill for the creation of a war memorial on alignment with the main street. In 1925 the new war memorial was bathed in floodlight by night, within sight not only of townspeople but also of those in the adjacent rural areas who did not have access



Albury's botanic garden and its riverside parks on the banks of the Murray River began to assume formal shape by 1888 when this lithographed bird's-eye view was published as a supplement to the local *Border Post* newspaper.



to electricity. Boosters claimed Albury was growing city-like in appearance. Albury was ‘on the threshold of citydom’—it was ‘the city of tomorrow’, ‘a coming city’.<sup>7</sup>

### Garrison towns

Situated at the break of railway gauge, Albury and Wodonga became a place of strategic importance during the Second World War. Defence personnel expanded the Wirlinga explosives and ammunition depot, installed a massive ordnance depot and vehicle park at Bandiana, and a large military camp and army hospital at Bonegilla. Altogether there were about 11,000 defence personnel stationed in the district. They required a steady supply of locally produced fruit, vegetables, eggs, milk, ice cream, meat, firewood. Many businesses in Albury and Wodonga had a good war. Yet a series of dry summers made the war years hard for local farmers and pastoralists. Townspeople did their best to promote war effort. They joined the dig for peace campaign with vegetable patches and the well-to-do raised funds for patriotic purposes with fashionable garden parties at Olive Street residences. At the end of the war Bandiana continued, indeed expanded as an ordnance depot and vehicle park, while Bonegilla became a migrant reception centre (1947–71).

### Postwar city

Just before the Bonegilla Migrant Centre opened, Albury, along with seven other large country municipalities in New South Wales, was declared a city. This rush of city declarations was part of a revitalisation of local government. The postwar years were to be the heyday of large country towns.

*Lanes became streets, paddocks  
became reserves, streets developed  
well-kept verges*

Houses and their gardens expressed something of the urban character of the new city. The firmest indication of the city’s achievement, citizens were told, was to be found in the built and cultivated environment, especially its ‘sturdy garden-girt homes’.<sup>17</sup> Lanes became streets, paddocks became reserves, streets developed well-kept verges. Competitions brought public notice to the most diligent gardeners, and had special awards for those who had built only in the last two years and for those who lived in a Housing Commission cottage. The fifties saw the emergence of the culture of home and garden. Albury took on the appearance and character of a remote suburb of a metropolitan centre.<sup>8</sup>

### Greening the National Growth Centre

The new Whitlam Government (1972) launched a number of urban and regional development projects, including a growth centre strategy. The Albury-Wodonga National Growth Centre project was to become its iconic decentralisation project, set to ‘attract population and economic activity away from the major metropolitan areas, particularly Sydney and Melbourne, in order to alleviate the undesirable pressures on these cities’. Subsequent governments cut funding and population targets were never reached. Yet critics seem to ignore the achievements of the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation, in particular how it addressed environmental issues related, for example, to the river, parklands, and residential estates. In cultivating a city in the country, the Development Corporation had a green thumb.

*In cultivating a city in the  
country, the Development  
Corporation had a green thumb*

At the beginnings of the project, the planners drew up protective strategies to preserve the natural environment and moved quickly to establish an environmental laboratory to keep a check on the water quality of the Murray River. During the 1980s new conservation policies related to the Murray River appeared at the national level and governments agreed to take a broader approach to the river system itself and established a Murray-Darling Basin Commission.

The Development Corporation established Carramar Nursery to propagate trees and shrubs for the Development Corporation’s use and established an energetic forward tree-planting program. Under its superintendent, Harry Jakobs, Carramar Nursery produced trees and shrubs for planting in urban and non-urban areas. It propagated 150,000 plants each year, almost all indigenous. These trees and shrubs were planted in each residential and industrial estate well ahead of the release date, so that there would be established growth from the outset. A further free issue of 40 shrubs and 10 trees was made to each landowner. In 1978 alone, Development Corporation staff planted 38,000 trees and shrubs in urban areas, and 100,000 in greenfield settings at Thurgoona and Baranduda. They landscaped 125 detached houses, using 5,000 advanced trees and shrubs and sowed 90,000 square metres of grass. Consultants Margules and Deverson set guidelines for a forward tree-planting program in 1977. The Development Corporation had been planting trees at the rate of just over 68,500 each

year for 13 years. By 1988, it had produced 1.25 million trees at an average cost of \$2 each.<sup>9</sup>

Less land was needed for development when the population target was lowered in 1976 and again in 1989. In 1985 the Victorian Land Conservation Council recommended that nearly half the land surplus to the needs of the Growth Centre should be retained for farming, about one quarter should be converted into regional parks, and another quarter into regeneration areas.

*The Development Corporation  
clustered its housing into newly  
developed estates ... rural values  
pervaded the promotional imagery*

The Development Corporation launched a bold Regional Parklands strategy that provided a twenty-year strategy for the development of an open space system in which hills and streams would be integrated. It gave particular emphasis to the reafforestation of the major surrounding hills to set the landscape character of the city. It looked to the development of town parks, riverine parks, and wilderness parks. It sought to retain the character of the Kiewa River floodplain and conserve the Murray River floodplain downstream from Lake Hume to central Albury. It made provision for recreational uses in a variety of inter-connected parklands.<sup>10</sup>

The Development Corporation clustered its housing into newly developed estates. This was to be a 'City in the Country' and rural values pervaded the promotional imagery. The

Development Corporation estates were designated as park, wood, green, hill, rise, and heights. The new roads took the form and names of crescents, drives, ways, circuits, views, closes, places, and even mews. The names of estates and subdivisions made picturesque allusions to farm, village, and rural values.

One of the most important roles of the Development Corporation was the manufacturing and selling of the image of Albury-Wodonga. In alerting the nation to the potential of the 'National Growth Centre', it portrayed Albury-Wodonga as a place with unusual vitality, one that had an unusual respect for environmental values. Albury-Wodonga was a brand name that won national recognition and carried, in the main, positive overtones.

### Beyond Growth Centre

Albury-Wodonga was well sited, planned, and managed. The basis was laid, in the growth centre years, for an enlarged and economically viable inland city in which there were pleasant neighbourhoods set within a surrounding area that demonstrated an unusually high respect for environmental values. From a local vantage point, at least, it seems that in spite of the prevailing orthodoxy, Australia's only major attempt at selective decentralisation was worth the effort.

**Bruce Pennay** is a historian and heritage consultant specialising in Australian regional history. He is an honorary adjunct associate professor in the School of Environmental Sciences at Charles Sturt University.

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# Alfred Patterson and Bathurst's Machattie Park

Spencer Harvey

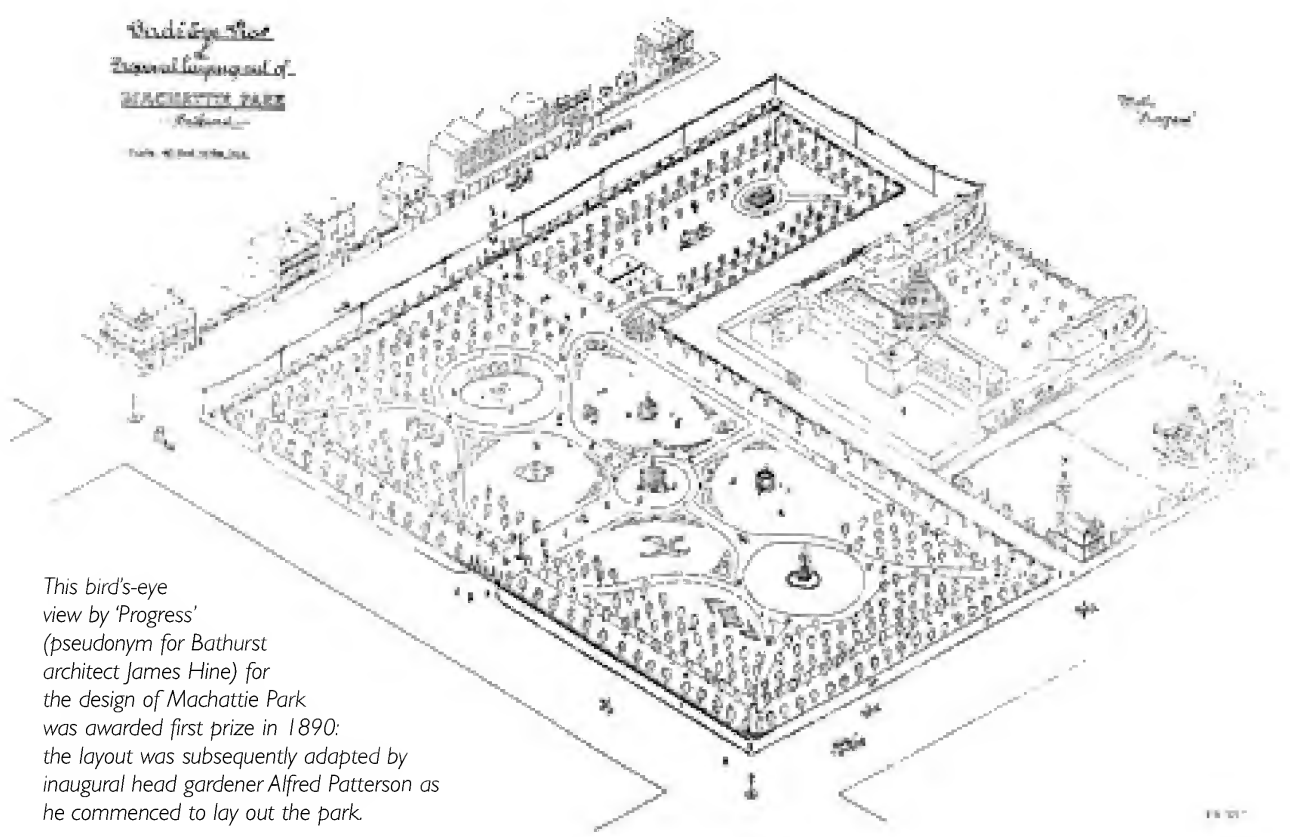
Bathurst's Machattie Park, named for local medico Richard Machattie (1813–1876), was established in 1890. As its inaugural head gardener, Andrew Patterson was in a strong position to influence its early development.

## Early career at Cook Park, Orange

Alfred Andrew Patterson (c.1857–1932) was born in Drottningholm, Sweden, and following study at Upsala University lectured at Hamburg University. His field of study is not known, but it seems reasonable to assume either surveying or botany. He then worked in England before migrating to Tasmania, where he was employed during the 1880s as a surveyor on the Mount Bischoff railway. Following botanical research in Queensland, he was engaged as surveyor/engineer for the Nyngan–Byrock railway in New South Wales. Whilst here he enlisted for the Sudan War (1885), but en route to Sydney was taken from the train at Orange suffering typhoid fever. He

was subsequently employed by James Dalton, MLA for Orange, owner of the large properties Kangaroobie and Duntryleague.<sup>1</sup>

When Cook Park, Orange, was opened in 1887, through Dalton's influence Patterson gained the position of inaugural head gardener. In early 1890 a deputation from local worthies from Bathurst visited Orange—ostensibly to examine the gravitational water supply scheme. At Cook Park they met Patterson, mentioning that Bathurst council was seeking a head gardener to lay out the new Machattie Park and that a competition was being held to find a design for the park. Patterson decided to offer a design, and later applied for the position of head gardener.<sup>2</sup>



## Head Gardener of Machattie Park, Bathurst

Patterson was duly appointed (from six applicants) in April 1890 as head gardener of Bathurst's Machattie Park, at a salary of £2 10s per week with a residence. The choice caused some disquiet amongst Orange aldermen—the mayor hinted darkly that the recent visit of Bathurst council was 'for the purpose of inducing Mr Patterson to leave Orange'. It seems, however, that Patterson had displayed sufficient talent during his three-year tenure at Cook Park to attract admiration within regional horticultural circles. The *Bathurst Times* reported that Patterson had indicated he would prefer the change of situation, perhaps hastened by the claim that Orange council had removed an assistant, 'which necessarily threw more work on the head gardener, who resented their action'.<sup>3</sup>

The design competition for Machattie Park was won by Bathurst architect James Hine, with Patterson gaining second place. Patterson's appointment as head gardener, however, meant he had the task of implementing Hine's design, sowing the seeds of future problems. Hine was also given the task of designing and building the cottage, fernery, and band rotunda, while Patterson was to layout the park—paths, lawns, flower beds, tree plantings, and fernery interior. Patterson was faced with a huge task and with council approval he made several changes to Hine's plan—resiting the fernery, reshaping the pond to form a reverse 'S' (but not to commemorate the work of Dr Spencer, as Bathurst folk lore has maintained), repositioning the great

fountain, and altering the lines of some paths. Faced with this mammoth task Patterson sought council sanction 'to lock up Machattie Park for the next four months ... The Park in its present state is unfit for any ladies or children to be walking in'.<sup>4</sup>

In June 1890 Patterson wrote to council seeking permission 'to engage a practical gardener's assistant at £2 2s per week'.<sup>5</sup> Henry Lynch was appointed and this very profitable partnership continued until 1907 when Patterson resigned to become the first Shire Engineer for Turon Shire. The two were of quite different personalities—Patterson, professionally trained, strong minded (even irascible), interested in politics and friend of politicians (Sir Henry Parkes and Sir George Reid are mentioned in his obituary), ready to defend his name at the slightest provocation, and an accomplished landscape gardener: Lynch, a career gardener, a humble, gentle man incapable of making enemies, a dedicated churchgoer and master bell ringer at All Saints Cathedral, a much-sought floral judge, and one who did not seek the limelight. It was a great partnership of different but strangely compatible personalities.<sup>6</sup>

## Developing Machattie Park

Both Cook Park and Machattie Park were located on difficult sites. Cook Park was located on a swamp and Machattie Park on the site of the old gaol, 'a wilderness of deformed trees and thousands of tons of stones, bricks and mortar'. Both gardens were designed in the prevailing Victorian style, with wide paths suited to promenading, sweeping lawns, exotic specimen trees, shrubberies, a lake, and specialised



Bathurst District Historical Society

Lake Spencer, and constructed in 1890 and named for local doctor and park promoter William Walter Spencer, is one of Machattie Park's earliest and most striking features providing an irresistible lure for younger visitors.



Bathurst District Historical Society

The marble statues in Machattie Park's fernery—representing *La Prigioniera A'More* (Prisoner of Love), *Dispaccio D'Amore* (Messenger of Love), and *Psyche* (the butterfly-winged muse of Cupid)—have been much-loved features since their installation in 1901.

horticultural environments (such as the fernery). The cumulative effect upon the visitor was a sense of beauty and grandeur. Both parks were also symbols of civic pride.<sup>7</sup>

Preparations for the official opening in December 1890 were frantic. The fernery was a huge task and in August Patterson was given permission to travel to the Blue Mountains to collect ferns and bush rock.<sup>8</sup> The Progress Association provided £30 for a fountain in the fernery (obtained from Messrs Lassetter & Co.) and in November Patterson reported that he had finished excavation of the lake and had 'put down 40 loads of granite in the same and have started filling it with water.'<sup>9</sup>

When the Great Fountain was officially opened on 24 December 1891, the water flowed via an underground pipe to the lake and a further pipe took the overflow into George Street and eventually it found its way back to Jordan Creek. One of Patterson's greatest contributions was to harness this flow of 4000 gallons an hour into an irrigation scheme. Channels (eighteen inches deep) were cut in different directions, two-thirds filled with rubble, covered with pine branches and other clippings (as temporary packing), on which was placed the turf. Water was let into the drains by means of siphons capable of lifting 1000 gallons an hour each. It then percolated through the stones, filled the drains, and soaked the ground.

Sluice boxes controlled the flow water, which provided deep watering.<sup>10</sup>

During 1899 Patterson commenced removing Monterey pines (*Pinus radiata*), planted for screening the earlier gaol reserve boundaries. He replanted with Huntingdon elms (*Ulmus x hollandica* var. 'Vegeta'), although in timeless fashion, the felling of the mature trees provoked local anger. Patterson wisely took the precaution of undertaking the work in a staged programme.<sup>11</sup>

### Patterson's career blossoms

Patterson undertook duties well beyond the confines of Machattie Park. In 1895 Bathurst Bowling Club was formed and on leased land adjacent to the Council Chambers Patterson was given the task of developing the bowling green.<sup>12</sup> In 1899 he addressed a horticultural conference at Bathurst Technical College on 'Grafting, Pruning, Budding and Hybridization'.<sup>13</sup> During 1900–01 Patterson was seconded by the New South Wales Government to organise floral displays for the Federation celebrations in Centennial Park, Sydney and the arrival of the Duke and Duchess of York (the future King and Queen), surely a proud moment in his career.<sup>14</sup> His reputation as a gardener also flourished throughout the NSW Central West with his regular gardening column in the *Bathurst Daily Times*. These monthly articles



had a regional focus on that portion of New South Wales, defined by Patterson as ‘Relative to the Western District between Mount Victoria and Dubbo and intermediate Country’. Severe drought in 1902 underpinned his early advice, and when things worsened in 1903, Patterson called on the state government to institute a massive irrigation scheme, with dams, which would provide irrigation from Bathurst to Warren. He concluded in February that year:

*Mr Editor ... it is simply a farce to advise people what to do when they have not the opportunity or means (in the way of moisture and water) to carry out such advice. When the season has changed, and after rain has fallen, or when a large national system of irrigation has been accomplished throughout the western district, and when people will be able to act on the advice given, then—if I am among the living—I shall be pleased to continue my notes on gardening.*<sup>15</sup>

In late 1904 a small plaque—inscribed ‘Alfred Andrew Patterson / Machattie Park / His Design - His Memorial’—appeared on the gate at the corner of George and Keppel Streets. The originator of this plaque is not officially recorded, but it appears highly likely that it was Patterson himself. Incensed, Aldermen Absalom Gartrell wrote a long letter to the *National Advocate* advancing the claims of the prize-winner Hine. Patterson strongly defended himself, having the last word: ‘I can assure Mr Gartrell that when he and I have passed away to that unknown region beyond, and from which none of us will return, that my name will still be known as the designer of the only Machattie Park in the Commonwealth.’<sup>16</sup>

## From Drottningholm to Demondrille

In 1904 Patterson was appointed to the dual

positions of Superintendent of Works as well as Head Gardener for Bathurst Municipal Council. When he accepted the position of Engineer for Turon Shire Council in 1907 there was a move by some Aldermen for him to hold both positions although his nemesis, Alderman Gartrell, led a ‘One Man, One Billet’ campaign to prevent this. However, Patterson’s high regard was recognised in a testimonial and ‘purse of sovereigns’, with Mayor E. T. Webb praising the man who ‘had made Machattie Park the beauty spot it was at present’.<sup>17</sup>

In his new position, Patterson took an even greater interest in civic affairs. In 1908 he became treasurer of Bathurst District Irrigation and Closer Settlement League and was instrumental in the development of weirs at White Rock and on the Campbell’s River.<sup>18</sup> It is at this time that it is believed that he developed the orchard at Fortuna (where the present Kelso High School stands). However, his feisty nature led him into numerous disputes with Councillors and in 1912, he was involved in a well publicised dispute with Councillor Sullivan over an entry in the procession for the Municipal Council Jubilee Celebrations.<sup>19</sup> Not long after this Patterson resigned from Turon Shire Council, leaving the district to take up a position as engineer with Weddin Shire Council and later with Demondrille Shire Council. In retirement, Patterson lived with one of his four sons, A.W. Patterson, who ran a newsagency in Orange. His first wife died in 1920 and he remarried in 1927. Alfred Patterson died in Sydney on 17 July 1932, a pioneer landscape gardener of the state’s Central West.<sup>20</sup>

Spencer Harvey gardens in Bathurst and is author of *The Story of Machattie Park* (2006).

1. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 July 1932; *Bathurst Times*, 20 July 1932.
2. C.W. Sloman, *The History of Bathurst*, Runciman Press, place, 1994, pp.74–75.
3. *Bathurst Times*, 14 April 1890.
4. Bathurst council minutes, 5 June 1890.
5. Bathurst council correspondence received, 19 June 1890.
6. S.W. Harvey, *The Story of Machattie Park*, Bathurst Family History Research, 2006, p.42.
7. Gutteridge, Haskins, & Davey, Machattie Park Management Plan, 1990.
8. Bathurst council minutes, 14 August 1890.
9. Report to Bathurst Council, 20 November 1890.
10. *Bathurst Times*, 29 October 1897.
11. *National Advocate*, 21 July 1899. It appears likely that one of the original Huntingdon elms survives near the Webb Gates in George Street.
12. Sloman op.cit. p.263; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 July

13. *Australian Technical Journal*, 31 October 1899.
14. Bathurst council minutes, February 1900.
15. *Bathurst Daily Times*, 4 July 1902; 12 February 1903. The state government did institute a massive irrigation scheme the following year, not in the Central West, as advocated by Patterson, but in the Riverina.
16. *National Advocate*, 13 February 1905, 15 February 1905; see also Bathurst City Council correspondence, 16 May 1958. The plaque still remains affixed to the new gates on the corner of George and Keppel Streets.
17. *National Advocate*, 15 March 1907. Mr F. Campbell was appointed Supervisor of Works and Henry Lynch as Head Gardener. Turon Shire later amalgamated with Evans Shire, which in 2004 amalgamated with Bathurst City Council to form Bathurst Regional Council.
18. Sloman, op. cit., p.54.
19. Ibid, p.139.
20. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 July 1932; *Bathurst Times*, 20 July 1932.

# 'Return to Lutyens': Florence Taylor and the folly of architecture

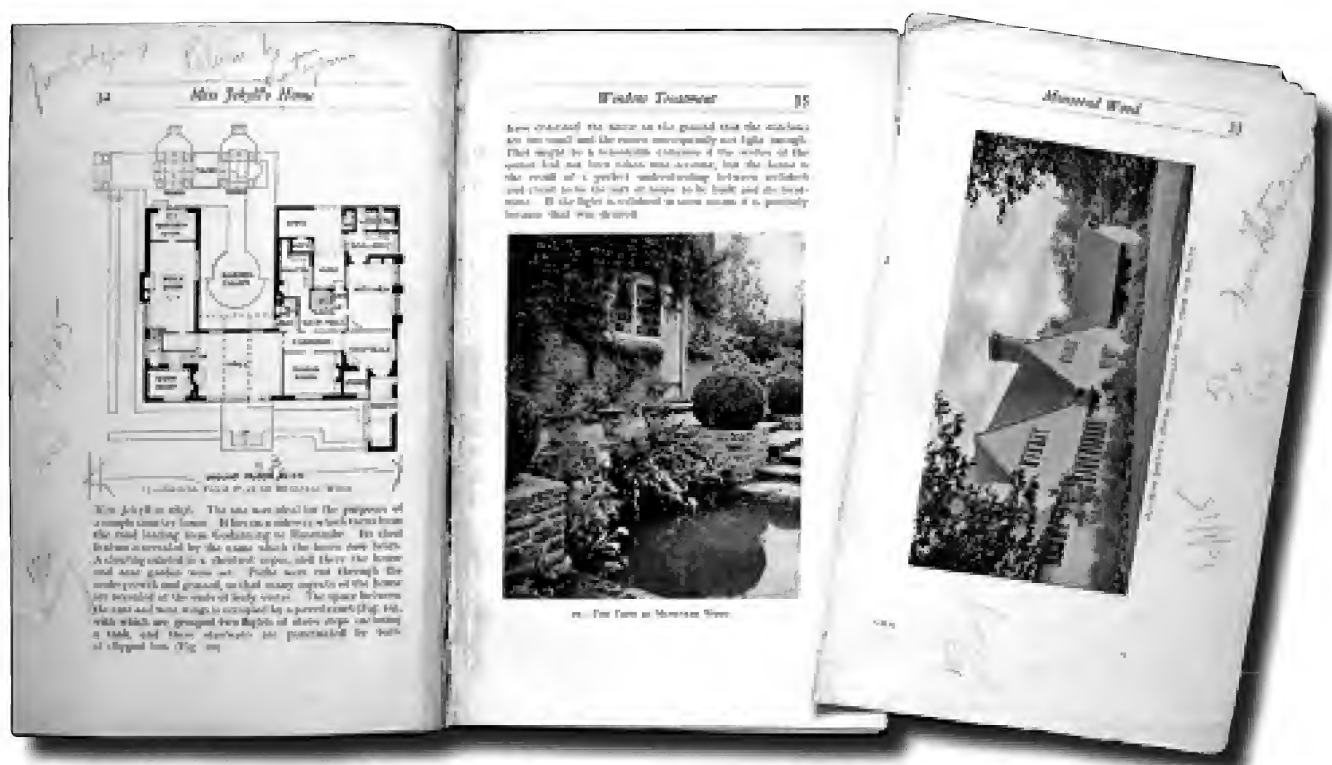
Richard Aitken

Books can occasionally reveal more than covers promise, and this is certainly the case with Sydney architect Florence Taylor's copy of Weaver's *Lutyens Houses and Gardens*.

The bookseller sighed apologetically. 'It isn't much of a copy I'm afraid', (or so he thought). I meanwhile cheerfully parted with the cost of an average meal (in our Olympic city) for the copy of Sir Lawrence Weaver's book *Lutyens Houses and Gardens* (Country Life, London, 1921). It was, in truth, in that rather shabby condition that booksellers euphemistically describe as a 'reading copy'. Many pages had been cut out and then reaffixed—some were still detached—and the pages were sprinkled with pencilled annotations. My interest had been sparked, however, by the ownership inscription of Florence M. Taylor (in ink on the front endpaper) as much as the Lutyens/Jekyll *frisson*. (It takes skill to keep this sort of excitement to one's self until after the transaction.)

Florence Mary Taylor (née Parsons) (1879–1969) was born in Bedminster, Bristol, England, and aged 4 migrated with her family to Sydney.

Her father died when she was 19 and to support her two sisters Florence turned to draughting. Articled to architect Edmund Garton, she attended night-classes at Sydney Technical School—one of very few females at this time—and after five years completed her course (1900–04). Well regarded for her design skills and the first qualified female architect in Australia, she was nominated in 1907 for membership of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales but claims to have been 'blackballed'. In that year Florence married George Augustine Taylor (1872–1928), a Sydney-born artist, inventor, and craftworker who had also trained at Sydney Technical College. The pair formed a publishing company, which embraced titles in the fields of architecture, building construction, engineering, radio, and music. Pre-eminent was *Building* (1907–72), edited, until his death, by George Taylor, a role then taken on by his wife. Town



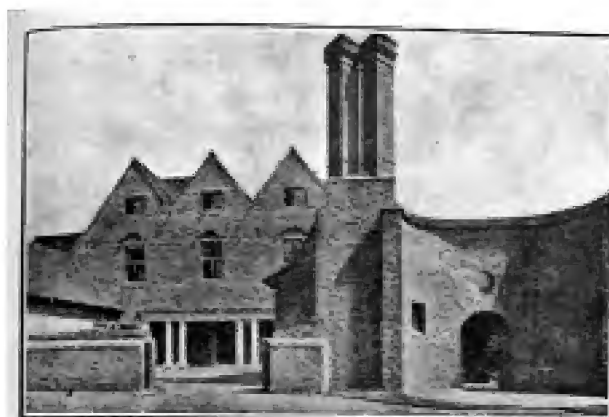
planning was a major concern of the Taylors, and through their journals they were strong and vocal advocates. Gardening, although not expressly covered by *Building*, was treated nonetheless as an integral part of design, both at a domestic level and on a broader public scale. Tree planting was keenly promoted.

Gardening was a key feature of Weaver's book of Lutyens. Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens (1869–1944) was by 1921 in an unassailable position at the top of England's architectural profession. His works had long been prominently featured by the lavish magazine *Country Life*—of which Weaver was the architectural editor—and his engagement as architect for New Delhi (from 1912) signalled an increasing commitment to public projects. Weaver had previously produced *Houses and Gardens by E.L. Lutyens* (1913) for *Country Life*, and the revised volume—now in more modest octavo format—brought to an even wider audience the earlier designs of Hestercombe, Munstead Wood, Goddards, Little Thakeham, Papillon Hall, Lambay Castle, and Folly Farm. Many had gardens planned and planted in conjunction with Gertude Jekyll (1843–1932).

The first of the pencilled annotations to strike me were numerous instances of 'From Lutyens', and one reading 'Return to Lutyens'. Were Florence and George really on such intimate terms with Edwin that he would loan the books, only to have them partially mutilated by these crass antipodeans? The loan theory seemed to be blown out of the water by such pencilled comments as 'The rounded corners—a mere outlet for the spending of money' (churlishly referring to entrance front of Lutyens' 1899 masterpiece, Tigbourne Court), or 'Striving after effect—Paucity of conception' (slighting the loggia at Marshcourt, a Lutyens *tour de force* in the Tudor manner). The Deanery, built at Sonning in 1900–01 for *Country Life* proprietor Edward Hudson (for whom Lutyens also altered Lindisfarne Castle), with a Jekyll/Lutyens garden 'producing effects of singular richness' came in for strident criticism. The ground floor plan is annotated 'Frightfully cut about / no one w[oul]d put up with these levels here / look at the trouble & expense in thick walls', and of the exposed roof framing—where Weaver lauds the 'lavish hand' of its creator—the pencilled hand quips 'Ponderously heavy'. Most damning of all is a photograph of the dramatic tank and loggia at Folly Farm, Berkshire (1912), annotated with magnificent sang-froid: 'Frightful waste of brickw[or]k—a real arch[itec]t c[oul]d not be guilty of such a thing'. The comments were presumably intended for private consumption only. Or so I thought.

The Taylors were incessant proselytisers for architecture in Australia, broadcasting their strident opinions through the various magazines in their stable. Initially, for instance, they were great supporters of Federal Capital designers Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin although almost overnight the adulation turned to enmity. Opinions were freely and frankly expressed, and so I took my cue from some of the annotations dated 1925 to see what the Taylors were writing about Lutyens in *Building*. Suddenly the link between the book and the journal became clear. During that year the Taylors republished several of the *Country Life* images with critical comment, and the pencilled annotations were merely a reminder to retrieve the loose pages from the printer and return them to the Lutyens book in Florence Taylor's collection.

Only recently have I been made aware of scholarship surrounding the Taylors, and in particular a forthcoming biography of Florence Taylor by Robert Freestone and Bronwyn Hanna. In this, the authors touch on the differing roles



#### TIGBOURNE COURT.

Designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

(From "Lutyens Houses and Gardens.")

The English are supposed to excel in domestic architecture, so perhaps it is doubtful taste for the Dominion child to criticise the parent's production; but may England's architecture never be judged by this! The angles of the gables and the factory-like chimneys which dominate the structure have been inspired by the Gothic, but the round arched opening, the classic pillars of the porch and the window heads have—or should have—nothing to do with the rest, and the veriest child student of our art schools would know better than to try and mix the two in a composition which might possibly be building but certainly could not truthfully be called architecture. The saw-tooth gables are an irritating feature, as are also the crippled pediments to the windows. The chimney stacks of brick upset all ideas of proportion and balance. Originality is shown in the use of materials and introducing colour into the design. Some of the keys to round arches and courses in the stone wall are of roofing tile and some of the quoins are of brick.



Photo: Richard Aitken

*Little Thakeham at Storrington, West Sussex, is widely recognised as one of the finest small houses designed by Edwin Lutyens—perhaps it was spared Florence Taylor's criticism by its elegant linking of house and garden, and its subtle borrowing from well-loved English architectural elements.*

that George and Florence Taylor played in editing and publishing *Building*, and it is likely from what is known of her character, that the annotations and published opinions belonged to Florence. This seems conclusively proved by the links between Taylor's copy of Lutyens and her attributed writing in *Building*.

In January 1925 the magazine published a portrait of Lutyens announcing that the great man was 'now on his way to Australia'. Accompanying an adjoining image of 'Imperial Delhi', however, the criticism started to pour forth:

*Probably if an Australian architect designed a city and buildings such as these, we would be fearless enough to call them a motley conglomeration; but they belong to a man with a great name in the architectural world ... When Sir Edwin adheres to pure Classic or Gothic ideals his designs are remarkable fine; it is only when he enters upon secessionist ideals that he "falls from grace" as illustrations in his book "Lutyen's [sic] Houses and Gardens" would indicate.*

During the ensuing months the trickle turned to a torrent as design after design was subject to intense scrutiny (and Lutyens was not alone in this). His additions to Folly Farm were blasted while the design of Tigbourne Court came in for a fearful pasting (somewhat apologetically prefaced 'it is doubtful taste for the Dominion child to criticise the parent's production, but ...'). Garden

features on the whole escaped this opprobrium but the pressure seemed to be mounting. Finally in October 1925 Florence Taylor signed her name to an eight-page article entitled 'Freak Architecture: its contempt for sentimental association and correct principles'. In this the pencilled annotations in Weaver's book and the published comments can be reconciled. Amidst a withering critique of the cream of the world's designers—including the Griffins (whose Newman College was illustrated and castigated)—Florence again singled out Lutyens. Speaking of his London Cenotaph (whose proportions she had derided in the pencilled comments) she let fly: 'Then again, there are other architects with personality enough to not only influence their clients but to convince the general public and win it over to their views, such as Sir Edwin Lutyens, who can plank [sic] a mass of stone, meaningless in its idea and ungraceful in its outline in the heart of London.' At least this did not qualify for tag 'Weird Architecture' which she used when sinking the slipper into another design.

One wonders what Lutyens would have made of it all. Sadly his visit to Australia—like that proposed some years earlier by eminent British town planner Thomas Mawson—never eventuated. What a delicious thought, though, of Edwin meeting Florence for a harbour-side drink to go the distance on 'secessionist ideals' versus 'sentimental association'.

## For the bookshelf

Anne Wilkinson, *The Passion for Pelargoniums: how they found their place in the garden*, Sutton, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 750 94428 1): hardback RRP \$49.95

While there exist extensive references to camellias, roses, lilliums, narcissus, and numerous other decorative plants there is comparatively little on zonal pelargoniums (aka geraniums) and regal pelargoniums (pelargoniums). These two hardy stalwarts have long been considered main-stay examples of the earliest colonial Australian gardens and almost every garden style since. Yet they have also been dogged with the widespread view that they are too common to be considered the subject of much detailed historic research. Anne Wilkinson's book *The Passion for Pelargoniums* changes that perception and adds historic hybrids to the extensive survey of species found in Diana Miller's *Pelargoniums* (1996) and van der Walt and Ward-Hillhort's three-volume monograph *Pelargoniums of Southern Africa* (1977–88).

Wilkinson adds a considerable amount of biographical and historical information concerning the plant hunters, botanists, amateur enthusiasts, and professional growers that enriches the basic background facts presented by the authors of the previous two botanical and descriptive works. While the coverage is essentially drawn from British sources there is mention of contemporary French and German activity and personalities. Although more sketchy towards the current era there is acknowledgement given to two Australian contributors to the development of geraniums and pelargoniums, Ted Both and Rob Swinbourne. This is pleasing, but perhaps not as thorough as it might have been. For instance, Len Bodé is one Australian breeder of regal pelargoniums who comes to mind. His plants were almost exclusively exported to the USA and introduced by greenhouses to the large market there. His contribution, while perhaps not so wide ranging as that of Both, was nonetheless international and significant. That small niggle aside *The Passion for Pelargoniums* is a good survey of the development, hybridisation, and introduction of that genus. Strongest in the earlier years of discovery and collecting the book tapers off somewhat as the whole field became more complex and international in the twentieth century. But for most gardener–historians the earliest records are the most interesting, and later information can, in many instances, be supplemented adequately by local resources and research.

The presentation of the book is not up to the mark for a modern publication. There are too many black and white illustrations. Where these are taken



Botanic Gardens of Adelaide

'Mrs Pollock': an old favourite

from engravings and early photographs black and white is an acceptable format. However, this is not the case where brilliant hand-coloured nineteenth-century plates and examples of early colour printing are used. While it may seem selfish to expect such treatment it is the standard for today and the book is diminished for the want of an understanding of this on the part of the designer and production team.

A modern summation of a neglected field of garden history.

**Trevor Nottle**

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Jessie Sheeler, *The Garden at Bomarzo: a Renaissance riddle*, Frances Lincoln, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 711 22673 9): hardback RRP \$59.95

Those fortunate enough to have visited the *Sacro Bosco* of Pier Francesco 'Vicino' Orsini at Bomarzo will know the fascination this strange garden exerts. No less so for those who know it only from illustrations in books—the garden of monsters, grotesques, mausolea, temples, theatres, and inscriptions exerts a profound and compelling influence. The reality and the imagery strike the



same sparks. What is this holy garden about? What does the structures and inscriptions mean?

Two earlier references have investigated the *Sacro Bosco* at Bormarzo in detail. Claudia Lazzaro set the garden in the context of Italian Renaissance gardens as the principal example of Mannerist ideas influencing garden design in *The Italian Renaissance Garden* (1990) while Margaretta Darnall and Mark Weil produced a detailed and scholarly examination of Bomarzo against a broader literary and artistic canvas in a dedicated edition of the *Journal of Garden History* (1984). Since then the garden has undergone a major restoration programme and a significant development as a touristic site. Abandoned by the Orsini family when Vicino died in 1584 the garden lay derelict and visited by very few until it was filmed by Salvador Dali and local art critic Mario Praz in 1949. Visits and study of the garden have grown from there. Sheeler's book provides and much needed link between the two earlier studies. It gives more detail than Lazzaro provides and makes accessible the material discussed in academic complexity by Darnall and Weil.

The garden is a mystery and mysterious. It gives rise to many questions, as its creator intended it to. The problem for modern visitors is that few have the cultural insight or knowledge of the symbolism and meaning embedded in the strange landscape they encounter. Interpretation is needed and Sheeler strikes an elegant balance between the interplay of academic, political, religious, sexual, philosophical, mythological, and mundane aspects of the composition. Perhaps most crucially of all Sheeler establishes the *Sacro Bosco* as the means by which a war- and world-weary man unburdened his heart of personal and political disappointments and intellectual disillusionment.

A highly satisfying book of great interest—a window into another, distant age.

**Trevor Nottle**

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Robert Freestone, *Designing Australia's Cities: culture, commerce and the city beautiful, 1900–1930*, UNSW Press/Routledge, Sydney, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 868 40811 8): paperback RRP \$49.95

The planning history of our cities is one that has received surprisingly little popular attention. While the catalogue abounds in detailed studies—Adelaide and Canberra between them account for the bulk of this literature—national overviews, much less international contexts, are thin on the ground. In this rarefied atmosphere, Robert Freestone has been a generous contributor. His earlier *Model Communities: the garden city movement in*

*Australia* (1989) provided a comprehensive overview of urban planning in the period now under review (1900–30) and *Designing Australia's Cities* now provides a complementary overlay.

By its very nature, the city beautiful went to work on the heart of the metropolis, seeking to pump life into central business districts slowed by the 1890s depression and still choking from piecemeal colonial developments. Or, so the city-beautiful proselytizers argued. As Freestone points out in his introduction, the ideals of the city beautiful derived from both sides of the Atlantic, and had as their aim a fusion of beauty and utility. The portmanteau of 'beautility'—coined in the early 1900s by American architect-designer Arnold Brunner—made its journey to the antipodes through a mix of professional designers and hard-nosed agents, the 'culture and commerce' of the subtitle.

Freestone's wide-ranging research and cogent analysis provide a meticulous picture of this predominantly design-based style of town planning. Until now, the major source on this style—William H. Wilson's *The City Beautiful Movement* (1989)—has presented a dominant North American narrative, but Freestone's Australian focus allows British and continental European sources to redress an imbalance. This is not to downplay North American influence on Australia at this time, which was crucial. Instead, the author is free to use the Australian situation as an international case study in the global transfer and development of town planning ideas. Freestone also sees a distinctively local contribution in the nurture of 'a nationally distinctive strain of early planning advocacy'.

*Designing Australia's Cities* sits midway between traditional scholarly erudition and the new 'lively and accessible' mode favoured by some publishers. This book is about ideas and outcomes, and for an expansive subject these warrant a generous design and layout. A book just over half as thick but double the page size may have permitted the integration for which I yearned, and at the same time quadrupled the market for this commendable new addition to the literature on Australian history. Still, the market forces which dictate such decisions were also at the core of the city beautiful movement. Our town planning has often been an uneasy balance between civic ambitions and commercial realities, and this book will hopefully stimulate renewed debate of past successes and failures.

**Richard Aitken**

A much expanded version of this review is published in a special art and architecture edition of *Australian Book Review* (November 2007).

# Just released

*Christmas always brings a flurry of new gardening titles. Here we present a selection of recent books, many of which will be reviewed at greater length in coming issues. Enjoy the bumper crop.*

**Australian Gardens: National Trust Desk Diary 2008**, Women's Committee of the National Trust of Australia (Victoria), East Melbourne, 2007 (ISBN 978 1 876 47361 7): hardback RRP \$25 (also available spiral bound)

No surprises here. Sensible arrangement of week-to-an-opening spreads juxtaposed with evocative images of significant Australian gardens by some of Australia's best-known photographers.

**Daniel Bunce, *Manual of Practical Gardening*** (Hobart Town, 1838), facsimile edition, Friends of Geelong Botanic Gardens Inc., Geelong, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 646 47975 0): paperback RRP \$31.40 (includes postage)

This pioneering colonial guide (and that of Thomas Shepherd—see below) should be on the bookshelves of every AGHS member. Now available at modest cost from the Geelong Friends (PO Box 235, Geelong, Vic., 3220). Full review in a future issue.

**Holly Kerr Forsyth, *The Constant Gardener***, The Miegunyah Press, Carlton, Vic., 2007 (ISBN 978 0 522 85432 9): hardback RRP \$75

Without even opening this breezy romp from journalist Holly Kerr Forsyth the book seems preternaturally destined for the Christmas stocking. Owing a debt to Stephanie Alexander's *Cook's Companion*, historical snippets blend with recipes, cultural notes, garden design advice, and myriad colour photographs by the author. Available through the AGHS at discounted price (\$56 plus postage and handling).

**Jeanette Hoorn, *Australian Pastoral: the making of a white landscape***, Fremantle Press, Fremantle, 2007 (ISBN 978 1 920 73154 0): paperback RRP \$29.95

Using paintings in the pastoral tradition and ideas surrounding the culture of land in Australia, the author provides a refreshing new look at the often uneasy relationship of people and the land through the lens of pastoralism.

***Landscape Gardening in Australia: Thomas Shepherd***, Mulini Press, Canberra, 2006 (ISBN 0 949 91098 8) paperback RRP \$40

Facsimile reprint of this classic Australian text from 1836 with an introduction by publisher Victor Crittenden (PO Box 82, Jamison Centre, ACT, 2614). Full review in a future issue.

**John Macarthur, *The Picturesque: architecture, disgust and other irregularities***, Routledge, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 1 844 72011 8): paperback RRP \$65 (also available in hardback)

A highly original look at this eighteenth-century concept by Australian academic John Macarthur from The University of Queensland. Full review in a future issue.

**Charles Quest-Ritson, *Gardens of Europe: a traveller's guide***, Blooming's Books, Burnley, Vic., 2007 (ISBN 978 1 876 47330 3): hardback RRP \$89.95

Guide to over 600 gardens including brief historical notes on each garden and in the national or regional introductions which provide the structure of this weighty volume. Well-known British author, now resident in France, and an Australian publisher.

**Tim Richardson, *The Arcadian Friends: inventing the English landscape garden***, Bantam Press, London, 2007 (ISBN 978 0 593 05273 0): hardback RRP \$65

A lively look at eighteenth-century English garden-making told through a fascinating interlinked biographical narrative. If you liked Jenny Uglow's *The Lunar Men* (2002) you'll enjoy this even more.

**David Symon & Manfred Jusatis, *Sturt Pea: a most splendid plant***, Board of the Botanic Gardens and State Herbarium, Adelaide, 2007 (ISBN 0 9775 6082 1): hardback RRP \$55 (also available in paperback and deluxe quarter-bound leather)

The story of an iconic South Australian plant told through its history and discovery, naming, biology, cultivation, and marketing, as well as fascinating cultural history of its use in art, design, legend and literature. Sumptuously illustrated and definitive.

**John Walter, *SGAP: the story of Arthur Swaby and the Society for Growing Australian Plants***, Australian Plants Society (SGAP Victoria) Inc., Hawthorn, Vic., 2007 (ISBN 978 0 909 83062 5): paperback RRP \$29.95

A meticulously researched account of SGAP including notes on pioneering Australian plant enthusiasts active before the Society's formation in 1956. Full review in a forthcoming issue. Contact SGAP (PO Box 357, Hawthorn, Vic.) for sales enquiries.

## Journal editorship

Due to pressure of her burgeoning media commitments Genevieve Jacobs has recently resigned as editor of *Australian Garden History*. Until other arrangements are put in place, the journal will be edited by members of the AGHS National Management Committee and Editorial Advisory Committee. All correspondence regarding the journal should be directed to the AGHS office. In future issues we can look forward to features on Bolobek, Adelaide Park Lands, and nationalism in Australian gardens.

Links: [www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au)

## Amazon Water Lily blooms again

The new Amazon Waterlily Pavilion at Adelaide Botanic Garden was opened in early November by South Australian premier Mike Rann. The striking new glasshouse, designed by Adelaide-based Flightpath Architects, retains the basin of Richard Schomburgk's original Victoria House (1868). To celebrate the opening of the new house, an exhibition featuring the giant Amazon waterlily (*Victoria amazonica*) is open until early 2008 in the adjacent (and soon-to-be-restored) Museum of Economic Botany. A highlight is the ABG's copy of Hooker and Fitch's extremely rare and spectacular *Victoria Regia, or illustrations of the Royal Water-Lily* (London, 1851), recently acquired through a generous benefactor. Welcome news also that Pauline Payne's long-awaited biography of Richard Schomburgk—whose older

brother Richard was instrumental in bringing viable seed of the lily from British Guiana (Guyana) to England—is soon to be published by Jeffcott Press (enquiries to 59 Jeffcott Street, North Adelaide, 5006).

Links: [www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au](http://www.botanicgardens.sa.gov.au)

## Cultural and historical geographies of the arboretum

Our sister society, the UK-based Garden History Society, has arboretums (or arboreta if you wish) as the theme of its latest issue of *Garden History* (supplementary issue 2 of volume 35: 2007). AGHS NMC member Max Bourke's article 'Trees on trial: economic arboreta in Australia' sits alongside contributions from the likes of Stephen Daniels and Brent Elliott. This special issue—which has many resonances for Australian readers and researchers—originated in the School of Geography at the University of Nottingham where the guest editors are based, and in papers presented to a conference hosted by the Linnaean Society of London, held in September 2006.

Links: [www.gardenhistorysociety.org](http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org)

**Jottanda** invokes a splendid archaic word meaning a collection of jottings, first used in a gardening context by Irish civil engineer, geologist, and seismologist Robert Mallet in his 'Horticultural Jottanda of a recent Continental Tour', published in Loudon's *Gardener's Magazine* in February 1833.



Adelaide Botanic Garden's new Amazon Waterlily Pavilion, opened in November 2007

Photograph: Richard Aitken

# Diary dates

## NOVEMBER 2007

### *Sunday 25*

ACT/Monaro/Riverina

Bus Field Trip noon to 4.15pm:

Charles Weston's landscapes established in Canberra 1913–1926 with Dr John Gray. The field trip will commence at 12 noon sharp at the intersection of Banks and Brown Streets, Yarralumla adjacent to Westbourne Woods arboretum (Royal Canberra Golf Course). There is ample space there to park cars. Bookings essential. Members \$20, Non-members \$25 **BOOKINGS:** expertco@ozemail.com.au.

### *Sunday 25*

ACT/Monaro/Riverina, Yarralumla  
Branch end of year drinks. 4.30pm.  
Cafe, Yarralumla Gallery & Oaks  
Brasserie. Members free, non-members \$5. Bookings appreciated for catering purposes. **CONTACT:** Judy Pearce expertco@ozemail.com.au.

### *Sunday 25*

Queensland, Lower Beechmont  
Christmas Break-up. Meet at 10am at 200 Freemans Rd, Lower Beechmont (telephone (07) 5533 1409). AGHS will provide tea, coffee, sugar, and milk. Bring lunch items to share. Cost: Members: \$10. Guests: \$15 **CONTACT:** Gill Jorgensen by 20 November, (07) 3341 3933 or jorgenkg@picknowl.com.au.

### *Sunday 25*

Southern Highlands, Wildes Meadow  
Wildes Meadow Garden Ramble, 10am. A visit to 3 gardens in Wildes Meadow, Linden Brae a 20 year old country garden which is rarely opened. Dragon Farm which is a plantswoman's garden surrounding a 100yr old farm house and Pat Bowley's Birchbeck an amazing garden of rare and unusual plants in Cleary's Lane. The first garden to be visited will Birchbeck where morning tea will be served followed by Linden Brae and then a BYO picnic at Dragon Farm. Cost \$30 Members \$35 non members. **CONTACT:** Sue Trudeau, strudeau@trudeau.com.au

## DECEMBER 2007

### *Tuesday 4*

Victoria, Parkville

Celebratory drinks in support of a fund to commemorate Nina Crone. 6-8pm at University College, College Crescent (Melway 2B,C3). Donation \$45 per person. **RSVP** Kathy Wright (03) 9596 2041

### *Sunday 9*

Sydney, Wahroonga  
Christmas Party, 25 Lucinda Avenue, Wahroonga, 5-7pm. Cost: \$15/20 non-members, includes refreshments. Bookings essential. Bookings & enquiries: **CONTACT:** Stuart Read, (02) 9873 8554 (w) (02) 9326 9468 (h) stuart.read@heritage.nsw.gov.au or Stuart1962@bigpond.com.au

### *Sunday 9*

South Australia, Stirling  
Christmas Drinks at Beechwood, Stirling 5pm. Donation is \$10 per person. Drinks will be provided. Members are asked to bring a plate of Christmas fare. **CONTACT:** Lyn Hillier (08) 8333 1329 by 5 December

### *Wednesday 12*

Victoria, Princes Hill  
Christmas celebration at the North Carlton Railway Neighbourhood House, 20 Solly Avenue, Princes Hill (Melway 29, H11) Please bring a photograph of a garden ornament to display. BYO picnic (gas BBQ, and seating available) **CONTACT:** Pamela Jellie 9836 1881 or email pdjellie@hotmail.com.

### *Friday 14*

Southern Highlands, Moss Vale  
Christmas Party and Botanic Art Exhibition Opening. The launch of our inaugural AGHS Botanic Art Exhibition will this year be combined with our branch Christmas party We have 18 botanical artists exhibiting and world renowned artist Susannah Blaxill will be opening the exhibition. **CONTACT** Sue Trudeau, strudeau@trudeau.com.au

## FEBRUARY 2008

### *Thursday 14*

Victoria, Clifton Hill

February Walk and Talk at 6.00pm. Meet at picnic rotunda at Quarries Park, Clifton Hill. Enter park at junction of Wright and Dwyer Streets (Melway 44 G1) and follow path to the right. BYO picnic and comfortable walking shoes. A member of the Merri Creek Management Committee will speak about the landscaping and re-vegetation programs that have successfully created a wildlife corridor along the creek and so enhanced the recreational amenity of the area. After the talk we will walk from Quarries Park along the Merri Creek trail for about half an hour to look at the newly created wetlands and plantings of indigenous species. Friends and family welcome. **CONTACT:** Bronwen Merrett email: bronm@bigpond.net.au.

## APRIL/MAY 2008

2008 Autumn Tour to the Monaro region of New South Wales led by Trisha Dixon, 27 April – 4 May 2008. Accommodation Novotel Lake Crackenback. **ENQUIRES:** AGHS Office.

## OCTOBER 2008

29th Annual National AGHS Conference, Southern Highlands NSW. 10–12 October 2008. **ENQUIRIES:** AGHS Office

## Recherche Bay

Members will be delighted that Dick and Pip Smith have made an additional gift of \$1.37 million towards land acquisition at Recherche Bay. This gift concludes the fund raising campaign for purchase of the reserve. Dick Smith emphasised that the appeal was a 'testimony to what passionate people can do to leave a positive impact on our unique Tasmanian environment and the lives of all Australians.'

# Conference review

## Meandering about the Murray: 28th Annual National Conference

Taking as its theme 'Interpreting the landscape of the Albury region', the Society's 28th Annual National Conference was a popular one. Booked out early, almost 200 people participated and despite problems finding gardens to visit (due to the drought), a very full program over four days was undertaken. The first day and a half was as usual given over to lectures.

**Dr Bruce Pennay** took us from the Wiradjuri's river 'Millewa', to Hume and Hovell's 'Hume River', and on to Charles Sturt's 'Murray River'. He described the waves of public projects which have shaped the city from river crossings, road, rail, a potential Federal city, to its part of the process of post World War II migration and on to the most recent attempt to get people to live in inland Australia, the Albury-Wodonga project. An interesting setting of the local scene was told with knowledgeable humour. (See story on page 6.)

**Dr Daniel Connell** described the journey of Australians from colonial times to the present in trying to find a way to be better river managers. In particular he focussed on the central part the Murray-Darling River management played in the early debates surrounding Federation and beyond. He pointed out while the present situation was cause for great concern and effort, we should look back to some of the serious and intelligent attempts to do it better, tried at the end of the

nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century.

**Glen Johnson** took us along the river via the arboreal habitat formed by the corridor of river red gums. He showed us the extraordinary diversity of life these magnificent trees support and the way in which they fit into the ecosystems of dry Australia by being green corridors on the meandering rivers often separating the wet from the arid interior. **John Hawker** next led us through the 'treescape' of introduced species which now gives the texture of a cultural landscape rather than a natural landscape, and so led us into 'gardening of the environment'.

**Dr Richard Groves** introduced us to differences in the concepts of 'introduced plants', 'naturalised plants', and finally for a small but very significant subset of both to become 'weeds'. He did this by tracing the trajectory of largely garden escapes, from the Macarthurs at Camden Park and African Olive, to Mrs Patterson (with two 't's)—who may receive more blame than she should for the spread of Riverina violets—to Saint Edna Walling and her Baby's Tears, which perhaps should have been called by its NSW name, Bony Tipped Fleabane, which Richard suggested might have limited its use!

**John Dwyer** took us on the journey of the *Hypericum* (St John's wort) invasion. From Bright and its racecourse it appears to have travelled, largely by road, to now cover some 900,000 hectares of Victoria despite attempts at biological



Photo: Brian Voce

Exploring Woomargama. The view from the courtyard at Woomargama looks over a ha-ha to the paddocks beyond.





Photo: Brian Voce

Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*), now a major weed, was a topic of conference lectures and featured prominently in the landscape of the Albury area.

and legal controls. He showed us how 'effective' legal proclamation had been (not much!) and made us pause to think whether natural remedies are worth the price! The speed of this plant's spread is an object lesson is what can happen when plants jump the garden fence.

**Dr Sarah Ryan** and **Kay Johnston** took different journeys to come to the same conclusion. They looked at the way we have shaped both nature and gardens to arrive at a point where we have to work *with nature* probably for our own survival and the survival of the rest of the ecosystems which we cherish. **Prue Smith**, who knows the gardens of the region well, gave us a sense of faith in the future by reminding us that historic gardens of the future are still being created in Albury and its surrounds today.

**Trisha Dixon** related the connections between writers and a sense of this place. She urged people to read the work of Rolf Boldrewood (who lived in Albury) *Robbery under Arms*, and as her talk unfolded she made the links with as diverse a range of writers as Barcroft Boake, Elyne Mitchell, Patrick White, and Banjo Patterson—an eclectic mix indeed.

**Dr David Dunstan** presented a story of heroic efforts to start a new industry in a new environment beaten in the end of by the vine

louse, *Phylloxera*, and changes in the tariff system. Sadly the decay of even the physical remnants is rapid and David's book, *Better than Pommard* (new edition out next year) might be the only record of it in years to come.

And finally we had an excellent overview from most of the gardeners whose places we visited over the next two and a half days. The best conclusion I can use, however, is provided by the beautiful words of that great Australian poet, Bruce Dawe, who was commissioned to write this piece a few months ago for the opening of the new Albury Library:

*Here in this place both past and future meet  
And in the living present join their power,  
And, as in every union that's replete,  
There is a richness which transcends the hour,  
And makes it memorable for years to come  
So time will add its own encomium ...*

*Since each of us, they say, is a living river  
This tribute to our lives and to our land  
Will serve to unite the gifted and the giver  
And reinforce what we all understand:  
That arts and learning merit our devotion  
Just as our rivers feed both land and ocean.*

**Max Bourke AM**



## Mission Statement

The Australian Garden History Society is the leader in concern for and conservation of significant cultural landscapes and historic gardens through committed, relevant and sustainable action.